

Message Text

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ACTION AF-08

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R 040930Z AUG 76

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4943

AMEMBASSY MAPUTO

INFO AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 1283

E.O. 11652: GDS-3

TAGS: EMIN ETRN EWWT MZ SF

SUBJECT: SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION VISIT TO PORT OF MAPUTO

REF: MAPUTO 833

1. WE REGRET OUR DELAYED COMMENTS ON MAPUTO'S COMPREHENSIVE REPORT OF SOUTH AFRICAN DELEGATION'S JULY VISIT TO PORT OF MAPUTO (REFTEL), BUT HOPE FOLLOWING WILL STILL BE OF HELP.

2. PARA 5-A, REFTEL, NOTED THAT UNDER PROPOSALS MADE BY DELEGATION SOUTH AFRICANS WOULD GUARANTEE TRANSHIPMENT OF 500,000 TONS COAL ANNUALLY FROM TRANSVAAL THROUGH MAPUTO TO CAPE TOWN. SOUTH AFRICAN RAILWAYS (SAR) REPS CLAIM THAT "NORMAL" TOTALS THROUGH AND INCLUDING 1974 AVERAGED ABOUT 255,000 TONS OF COAL ANNUALLY. AFTER PORT DIFFICULTIES AROSE FOLLOWING
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MOZAMBIQUE/RHODESIAN BORDER CLOSURE, SOUTH AFRICAN

COAL TRANSSHIPMENTS FOR IN-COUNTRY USE WERE IN PART DIVERTED TO DURBAN AND AT OTHER TIMES MOVED OVERLAND BY SAR. REPORTEDLY, OVERLAND RAIL FREIGHT RATES (TO CAPE TOWN) HAVE NOT BEEN PROHIBITIVE BUT SEA ROUTE FAR MORE DESIRABLE IF, ON ONE HAND, ADEQUATE LEAD TIME IS POSSIBLE AND IF, ON THE OTHER, PRODUCERS AND CONSUMERS CAN BE GUARANTEED THAT UNDUE DELAYS WILL NOT OCCUR.

3. DELEGATION IS REPORTED TO HAVE ALSO TOLD MOZAMBIQUE RAIL AND PORT AUTHORITY (CFM) THEY COULD GUARANTEE SHIPMENT OF 1,250,000 TONS OF MAGNETITE ANNUALLY THROUGH MAPUTO (PARA 5-B). THIS WOULD BE MAGNETITE IRON ORE CONCENTRATES FROM PALABORA MINING COMPANY, LOCATED NEAR KRUGER PARK IN THE EASTERN TRANSVAAL (NOT NEAR JOHANNESBURG; REFTTEL).

PALABORA'S MAGNETITE (AS A BYPRODUCT OF ITS MASSIVE COPPER OPERATION) HAS BEEN SHIPPED THROUGH MAPUTO TO JAPAN SINCE THIS PHASE OF THE COMPANY'S COMPLEX WENT ON STREAM IN 1966. SAR RAIL CAR SHORTAGES AND MAPUTO PORT DELAYS HAVE, HOWEVER, PLAGUED THESE MOVEMENTS FROM THE BEGINNING. LARGEST TONNAGE OUTLOADED THUS FAR WAS 1.0 MILLION TONS IN 1969. EXPORTS IN 1975: 0.6 MILLION TONS (ALL THROUGH MAPUTO).

4. THERE ARE ONLY TWO PRODUCERS OF MAGNETITE IN SOUTH AFRICA -- HIGHVELD IRON & TITANIUM AND PALABORA. HIGHVELD'S OUTPUT IS CONSUMED LOCALLY; PALABORA'S PRODUCTION IS EXPORTED ONLY. CLEARLY PALABORA WOULD WELCOME A 1.2-1.3 MILLION-TON YEAR IN THE FUTURE. IN BETTER DAYS, PALABORA SHIPPED ALL OF ITS EXPORT COPPER PRODUCTS THROUGH MAPUTO AS WELL, BUT SWITCHED TO SOUTH AFRICAN PORTS AT THE TIME OF THE BORDER CLOSURE TO PROTECT THIS MORE VALUABLE COMMODITY FROM LOSS OR (AT BEST) SHIPPING DELAYS.
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